

Message Text

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT ANTHONY LEWIS OP-ED COLUMN THE NEW YORK TIMES MONDAY, DECEMBER 27 HEADED "AND THERE WAS DARKNESS."

2. WASHINGTON, DEC. 26.--IT IS A SEASON TO THINK NOT ONLY OF THE TROUBLED IN OUR MIDST BUT OF THE EARTH'S AFFLICTED PEOPLES. OF ALL THOSE WHOSE UNHAPPINESS CRIES OUT TO THE CONSCIENCE OF MANKIND, THE MOST DESOLATE MAY BE THE PEOPLE OF CAMBODIA.

3. WE HAVE NO CURRENT INFORMATION ON CAMBODIA FROM FIRST-HAND OBSERVATION BY WESTERN DIPLOMATS OR JOURNALISTS; THEY HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED SINCE THE KHMER ROUGE TOOK CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY IN APRIL 1975. BUT REFUGEES, QUESTIONED BY EXPERIENCED CORRESPONDENTS, REPEATEDLY AND CONVINCINGLY
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PAINT THE SAME PICTURE: OF A CRUSHED SOCIETY LIVING UNDER CONDITIONS OF TERRIFYING BRUTALITY.

4. THE REPORTS TELL OF WHOLE POPULATIONS MARCHED GREAT DISTANCES, FORCED TO WORK ENDLESS HOURS IN THE FIELD, CRUELLY PUNISHED, SOME CLUBBED TO DEATH, AND ALL OF

THIS HAPPENS AT THE ORDERS OF AN UNSEEN, UNKNOWN,
KAFKAESQUE LEADERSHIP.

5. AMERICANS HAVE PARTICULAR REASON TO LOOK ON CAMBODIA
AND DESPAIR. FOR AMERICAN POLICY AND AMERICAN BOMBS
PLAYED A LARGE PART IN BRINGING CAMBODIA TO ITS PRESENT
PATHETIC STATE. TO SAY THAT IS NOT TO EXCUSE THE CRUELTIIES
OF THE KHMER ROUGE; NOTHING CAN DO THAT. IT IS ONLY
TO RECOGNIZE THE HEAVY UNITED STATES RESPONSIBILITY IN THE
EVENTS THAT LED TO CONTROL OF CAMBODIA BY THE FACELESS
MEN OF TERROR.

6. THE AMERICAN ROLE IN CAMBODIA HAS MOSTLY FADED FROM
OUR MEMORY, IF INDEED IT WAS EVER UNDERSTOOD. BUT IT HAS
JUST BEEN RE-INVESTIGATED AND DESCRIBED IN A WAY THAT
COMPELS UNDERSTANDING. TWO WEEKS AGO THE SUNDAY TIMES OF
LONDON PUBLISHED A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF UNITED STATES
POLICY IN CAMBODIA, 1969-75, BY WILLIAM SHAWCROSS. IT IS
A REMARKABLE PIECE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY--AND PAINFUL
READING FOR AMERICANS WHO BELIEVE IN THEIR COUNTRY'S IDEALS

7. CAMBODIA LIVED IN A STATE OF INGLORIOUS BUT RELATIVELY
PEACEFUL POLITICAL COMPROMISE UNDER SIHANOUK UNTIL 1969.
ONLY A FEW THOUSAND COMMUNIST INSURGENTS FOUGHT, IN-
EFFECTUALLY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. THEN RICHARD NIXON
BEGAN SECRETLY BOMBING THE EASTERN BORDER AREAS USED BY THE
NORTH VIETNAMESE. THE VIETNAMESE FORCES RESPONDED BY MOV-
ING DEEPER INTO CAMBODIA. THE COUNTRY'S DELICATE INTERNAL
POLITICAL BALANCE WAS UPSET.

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8. IN MARCH 1970, SIHANOUK LEFT FOR MOSCOW AND PEKING, TO
SEE IF THEY WOULD HOLD THE VIETNAMESE BACK. WHILE AWAY,
HE WAS OVERTHROWN BY LON NOL. (MR. SHAWCROSS DOES NOT
SUGGEST ANY UNITED STATES PART IN THE COUP.) OPPOSITION
TO THE LON NOL REGIME MOVED THE COUNTRY QUICKLY TOWARD
FULL-SCALE CIVIL WAR.

9. THE CRUCIAL QUESTION WAS WHETHER THE POLARIZATION COULD
BE STOPPED THEN--AND CAMBODIA SAVED FROM THE SUFFERING OF
VIETNAM AND LAOS. THE CHINESE PRIME MINISTER, CHOU EN-LAI,
BELIEVED A SETTLEMENT WAS POSSIBLE, BRINGING SIHANOUK BACK.
ACCORDING TO MR. SHAWCROSS, CHOU WARNED THAT THE LONGER A
CIVIL WAR WENT ON, THE HARSHER WOULD BE THE POLICY OF THE
KHMER ROUGE. CHINA EVEN DELAYED BREAKING RELATIONS WITH
PHNOM PENH AFTER THE LON NOL COUP--UNTIL MAY 6, A WEEK
AFTER THE UNITED STATES HAD EFFECTIVELY ENDED THE CHANCE
OF POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THEN BY INVADING CAMBODIA.

10. THE UNITED STATES INVASION WAS PLANNED BY MR. NIXON

AND HIS ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY, HENRY KISSINGER, AGAINST THE OVERWHELMING JUDGMENT OF THEIR OWN EXPERTS. MR. KISSINGER TOLD ONE MEMBER OF HIS STAFF WHO OBJECTED, WILLIA; WATTS: "YOUR VIEWS REPRESENT THE COWARDICE OF THE EASTERN ESTABLISHMENT."

11. AT THAT STAGE THERE WAS STILL A QUESTION WHETHER THE UNITED STATES WOULD BECOME INVOLVED IN CAMBODIAN CIVIL WAR. MR. NIXON AND HIS AIDES PROMISED THAT IT WOULD NOT--THAT THE AMERICAN ROLE WOULD END AFTER THE NORTH VIETNAMESE "SANCTUARIES" WERE CLEANED OUT. THE PROMISES WERE IMMEDIATELY BROKEN. WITHIN A WEEK, MR. KISSINGER'S DEPUTY, ALEXANDER HAIG, WAS IN PHNOM PENH TO PLAN MILITARY LIAISON.

12. OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS THE UNITED STATES VIRTUALLY UNCLASSIFIED

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TOOK OVER THE WAR AGAINST THE KHMER ROUGE. A UNITED STATES DIPLOMAT IN PHNOM PENH, THOMAS ENDERS, IN KNOWING VIOLATION OF LAW, SECRETLY TARGETED AMERICAN BOMBERS. THE HEAVIEST BOMBING CAME IN 1973, AFTER THE TRUCE IN VIETNAM HAD ENDED ANY LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR IT. A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL, WILLIAM SULLIVAN, TESTIFIED THAT "THE JUSTIFICATION IS THE RE-ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT."

13. ALL TOGETHER, IN THE NIXON-KISSINGER YEARS, AMERICAN PLANES DROPPED 500,000 TONS OF BOMBS ON A PEASANT COUNTRY WITHOUT A SINGLE ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPON. THE COUNTRY WAS DECIMATED. A SENATE COMMITTEE ESTIMATED THAT 500,000 CAMBODIANS DIED IN THE WAR--THE EQUIVALENT, IN PROPORTION TO POPULATION OF 15 MILLION AMERICAN DEATHS.

14. THROUGH THOSE YEARS MR. KISSINGER REJECTED ONE PROPOSAL AFTER ANOTHER FOR NEGOTIATION. THE KHMER ROUGE GREW IN NUMBERS AND FEROCITY. BUT THEN UNITED STATES POLICY WAS ESSENTIALLY UNINTERESTED IN THE FATE OF THE CAMBODIANS. ITS PURPOSE WAS TO PRESERVE AMERICAN "CREDIBILITY" BY NOT BEING SEEN TO "LOSE."

15. OUR CULTURE, UNLIKE SOME OTHERS, BELIEVES IN INDIVIDUAL MORAL RESPONSIBILITY. AND SO ONE WONDERS WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO AMERICANS RESPONSIBLE FOR AN INTERVENTIONIST CAMBODIA POLICY SO INDIFFERENT TO CAMBODIAN SUFFERING.

16. THOMAS ENDERS, WHO GUIDED THE BOMBERS IN, IS NOW THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO CANADA. WILLIAM SULLIVAN, WHO CITED POLITICS AS LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR THE BOMBING, IS

AMBASSADOR TO THE PHILIPPINES, GEN. ALEXANDER HAIG IS
NATO COMMANDER. AND HENRY KISSINGER IS ABOUT TO RETIRE
AS A CELEBRATED SECRETARY OF STATE. ASKED RECENTLY ABOUT

HIS ROLE IN THE CAMBODIAN TRAGEDY, HE SAID: "I MAY HAVE A
LACK OF IMAGINATION, BUT I FAIL TO SEE THE MORAL ISSUE
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INVOLVED." (END TEXT)
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